

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, JA

SUBJECT: JAPANESE REACTION TO CARTER NOMINATION

SUMMARY. JAPANESE INTEREST IN DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE CARTER BLOSSOMED ONLY RECENTLY. THEY WELCOME THE IMPORTANCE CARTER ATTACHES TO JAPAN AND HIS PROMISE OF CONTINUING CONSULTATION ON IMPORT MATTERS. CARTER'S PROPOSED TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM KOREA HAVE, OF COURSE, ATTRACTED PARTICULAR ATTENTION, BUT RECENT STATEMENTS HAVE PALPABLY REDUCED EARLIER JAPANESE CONCERN. ALTHOUGH CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISORS, SUCH AS BRZEZINSKI, ARE NOT UNKNOWN HERE, MANY JAPANESE ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF LINKS TO CARTER DIRECTLY AND HIS GEORGIA STAFF. IN SUM, THE JAPANESE ARE REACTING TO AN UNKNOWN IN CHARACTERISTIC FASHION: SEEKING TO PERSUADE THEMSELVES THERE WILL BE NO IMPORTANT CHANGES, BUT FEARING VAGUE NEW DEMANDS, WHILE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORKING HARD TO FORGE PERSONAL TIES. END SUMMARY.

1. HAVING ABSORBED THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION AND US POLLS INDICATING THAT CARTER MIGHT BEAT EITHER GOVERNOR REAGAN OR THE PRESIDENT, WIDESPREAD JAPANESE INDIFFERENCE TO CANDIDATE CARTER HAS SHIFTED ALMOST OVER-NIGHT TO INTENSE INTEREST. REFLECTING THIS, CARTER IS NOW RECEIVING MUCH MORE MEDIA ATTENTION.

2. EDITORIAL REACTION THUS FAR HAS BEEN GENERALLY FAVORABLE AND REMARKABLY UNANIMOUS. EDITORIAL WRITERS RECALL THAT CARTER VISITED JAPAN LAST YEAR AS A MEMBER OF THE TRILATERAL COMMISION AND, ON THAT BASIS, DESCRIBE HIM AS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT JAPAN. THEY MARVEL THAT A "PROVINCIAL POLITICIAN" MOSTLY UNKNOWN IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, SHOULD BE NAMED A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE AND BE GIVEN A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING. IN EXPLAINING THIS EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON, THEY SUGGEST THAT CARTER'S THEMES OF RECONCILIATION AND COOPERATION APPEAL GREATLY TO THE CURRENT CONSERVATIVE MOOD OF AMERICANS DISHEARTENED BY VIETNAM AND WATERGATE. THIS, ALONG WITH UNEXPECTED DEMOCRATIC PARTY UNITY, MAKE A CARTER WIN LIKELY. ALTHOUGH NO BASIC FOREIGN POLICY CHANGES ARE ANTICIPATED, JAPANESE ARE PLEASED WITH THE IMPORTANCE CARTER ATTACHES TO JAPAN AND HIS PROMISES OF NO "SHOCKS" AND CONTINUING CONSULTATION, PARTICULARLY ON KOREA TROOP WITHDRAWALS. BUT THERE IS ALSO SUBSTANTIAL CONCERN THAT CARTER MIGHT EXPECT A MORE "POSITIVE ROLE" OF JAPAN, PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AREAS.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, TOO, HAS BEGUN TO STUDY CARTER, HIS VIEWS, AND THE PEOPLE AROUND HIM. RELYING HEAVILY ON CARTER'S JUNE 23 COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS SPEECH, THE FONOFF EXPECTS NO SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN BASIC US FOREIGN POLICY IF CARTER WERE ELECTED, ONLY A CHANGE IN STYLE. ANALYSTS HAVE NOTED HE IS NOT ISOLATIONIST OR OPPOSED TO DETENTE, BUT URGES A MORE OPEN -- SHOCK FREE -- FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS. OFFICIALS REPORTEDLY WELCOME THE TOP PRIORITY CARTER ATTACHES TO JAPAN (AND THE WEST EUROPEANS), AND HIS STATEMENT THAT JAPAN'S SECURITY IS CENTRAL TO OUR OWN. THEY ARE PLEASED BY HIS PROMISE OF CONTINUING CONSULTATION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES. THEY DETECT A WELCOME CARTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIFFERENTIATION AMONG US ALLIES IN ASIA, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN JAPAN AND KOREA, BUT THIS THEY FEAR MAY MEAN ADDED PRESSURE FOR JAPAN TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC AND/OR MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO OTHER ASIAN NATIONS. SOME ARE ALSO APPREHENSIVE THAT AS PRESIDENT, CARTER MIGHT NOT STAND UP TO A DEMOCRATIC-CONTROLLED CONGRESS WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON JAPAN TO SHARE BURDENS, ETC. OTHER MINISTRIES APPEAR TO HARBOR SIMILAR, IF MORE PAROCHIAL, CONCERNS.

4. UNDERSTANDABLY, JAPANESE HAVE FOCUSSSED ON CARTER STATEMENTS ABOUT POSSIBLE US TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM SOUTH KOREA. THE ISSUE FIRST ATTRACTED ATTENTION HERE DURING THE VISIT OF SELF-STYLED CARTER ADVISOR (AND HARVARD PROFESSOR) JEROME COHEN. IT WAS ALSO EXTENSIVELY DISCUSSED DURING THE RECENT VISIT OF SENATOR MANSFIELD. INITIAL JAPANESE FEARS THAT CARTER MIGHT RAPIDLY WITHDRAW US TROOPS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN DIMINISHED MARKEDLY BY CARTER'S JUNE 23 PROMISE TO CONSULT ON THIS AND OTHER IMPORTANT MATTERS, AND MANSFIELDS' ASSURANCES THAT US TROOPS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN ONLY AFTER CONSULTATION AND OVER A PERIOD OF TIME.

5. JAPANESE OF ALL STRIPES ARE CURRENTLY WORRYING ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF LINKS WITH CARTER AND HIS IMMEDIATE STAFF. ALTHOUGH CARTER ADVISORS BRZEZINSKI, BALL AND VANCE ARE REASONABLY WELL KNOWN HERE, THEIR INFLUENCE ON CARTER IS UNCLEAR AND NOTHING IS KNOWN OF CARTER'S LONGTIME GEORGIA-BASED ENTOURAGE. PRIMIN MIKI MET CARTER BRIEFLY HERE LAST YEAR AND SAW GEORGE BALL AT A

FONMIN MIYAZAWA
REPORTEDLY MADE A SPECIAL TRIP TO NEW YORK JUST BEFORE THE SAN JUAN SUMMIT TO CONSULT WITH BALL, BRZEZINSKI, CYRUS VANCE AND JAPAN SOCIETY PRESIDENT ISAAC SHAPIRO ABOUT CARTER. DEPUTY PRIMIN FUKUDA AND FINMIN OHIRA ALSO MET CARTER BRIEFLY HERE LAST YEAR. ONLY ONE FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL, FORMER ATLANTA CONGEN KAZUO CHIBA, HAS MET CARTER. CHIBA WAS RECENTLY TRANSFERRED TO (WEST) BERLIN, BUT THE MINISTRY IS ALREADY MAKING PLANS TO BRING HIM TO WASHINGTON IF CARTER WINS. IN THE MEANTIME, EMBASSY COUNSELORS IN WASHINGTON ARE SAID TO BE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS
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TO MAKE CONTACT WITH CARTER'S INNER CIRCLE OF GEORGIA ADVISORS.

6. COMMENT. MOST JAPANESE ASSUMED UNTIL VERY RECENTLY THAT THE PRESIDENT'S ELECTION WAS ASSURED. THEY WERE JUST BEGINNING TO TAKE CARTER MORE SERIOUSLY, WHEN THEY WERE STARTLED BY REPORTS FROM THE US THAT HE MIGHT WELL WIN. THIS HAS ADDED GREAT URGENCY TO THEIR SEARCH FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HIM. POLITICIANS, BUREAUCRATS AND JOURNALISTS HERE ARE NOW HAPPY TO HAVE ANY SCRAPS OF INFORMATION ABOUT CARTER OR HIS ADVISORS. IN THE MEANTIME, THEY ARE IN SHORT, REACTING TO AN UNKNOWN QUANTITY CHARACTERISTIC JAPANESE FASHION: TRYING TO PERSUADE THEMSELVES THAT NOTHING WILL CHANGE, WHILE VENTING BARELY SUBSURFACE FEARS THAT NEW DEMANDS WILL BE PRESSED UPON THEM. BUT MORE IMPORTANT IN JAPANESE EYES THAN CARTER'S VIEWS IS THE MAN HIMSELF. THEY ARE KEENLY AWARE THAT FEW

JAPANESE KNOW HIM OR THE MEN CLOSEST TO HIM AND THEY WILL
BE WORKING HARD TO REMEDY THIS IN THE WEEKS AND MONTHS AHEAD.
SHOESMITH

NOTE BY OC/T: TOKYO 10974 OMISSION IN TEXT.
CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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